

Advantages of the present invention will become more apparent from the detailed description given hereinafter. However, it should be understood that the detailed description and specific examples, while indicating preferred embodiments of the invention, are given by way of illustration only, since various changes and modifications within the spirit and scope of the invention will become apparent to those skilled in the art from this detailed description.

Brief Description of the Drawings

The present invention will become more fully understood from the detailed description given hereinbelow and the accompanying drawings which are given by way of illustration only, and thus do not limit the present invention.

- 10 Fig. 1 is a block diagram of a printing system to which the invention is applicable;
- Fig. 2 is a block diagram of one of the printers in the printing system shown in Figure 1;
- Fig. 3 is a flow chart illustrating a function of the printing system in accordance with the invention;
- 15 Fig. 4 is a dialog to be presented to a user of the printing system;
- Fig. 5 is a dialog to be presented to the key operator of a printer;
- Fig. 6 is a dialog to be presented to a user on the local printer terminal;
- Fig. 7 is a flow chart illustrating a function of the printing system in accordance with an alternative embodiment of the invention; and
- 20 Fig. 8 is a flow chart illustrating an additional aspect of the system.

Brief Description of Preferred Embodiments

Figure 1 shows a system of workstations WS and printers PR connected by a local network N. The workstations are, for example, PC's and are in each case can be equipped with a processing unit, a screen, a keyboard and a mouse (or some other pointing device). The printers are digital copying machines each comprising a scanner, a print engine, a local terminal and a connection unit (digital access controller or DAC) for connection to the network and processing print jobs sent from the workstations. In addition, it is possible to use machines which only have a printer function. All these machines, copying machines and printers, are hereinafter referred to as "printer". Users wishing to have a specific data file printed from their workstation, can for the purpose choose from a number of, or even all, the printers of the system.

In the example shown, each printer has as an operating console or local terminal 10, a print button 11 and three trays 12 which may be loaded with recording sheets of